

10 THE SETTING

114 "the Europeans of Magumeri." This pattern involved interviewing and visiting  
123 households in Magumeri and its surrounding hamlets during the morning, asking  
• 124 questions about household life, farming, and the social relations within the household and between its members and the wider community. Along with attendance at ceremonies, these morning activities came to be defined locally as my "work." My wife, not a trained anthropologist, visited a number of her women friends in the mornings, and looked after household matters. However, she was a part of Magumeri women's society, and we gained insights from her friendships that would have been difficult for a man to achieve by himself. In the afternoon we very often visited with a group of the young men who were associates of the school teacher. They became our intimate friends, and were defined locally as such. During these sessions, we participated in the conversation, or listened, often breaking in to ask questions about the meaning of some event being discussed. Sometimes data collected elsewhere in the mornings, would be discussed with our friends—hiding the identity of the informant when possible—in order to more fully understand what it was that had been collected.

114 This rather regular schedule was punctuated with visits to see the district head, visits to other villages, and a trip into Maiduguri, the capital, every month for a day or two to obtain supplies for the household. Special events such as the visit of another chief, or a touring British official, also broke the regularity of our days. But in general time stopped. We were without newspapers, radio, television, and even our mail was collected only when we went in once a month to the city. In this way, news from the world outside Bornu reached us first through Kanuri perspectives. Thus when the Suez crisis began in 1957 we heard of it from a young cattle inoculator who was living in Magumeri and had brought a battery radio with him. He told us and a large crowd that the British had attacked and "were killing the Muslims," but that the Russians and the Chinese were supporting the Muslims and were going to kill all the British. For days we were asked the relative population figures of Great Britain, Russia, and China, and really did not get the story straight ourselves for a day or so.

114 Later, after more than ten months of fieldwork, I began thinking of gathering  
125 some questionnaire data on farming, marketing, status rating of occupations,  
124 and family budgets. The latter was attached to morning visits and became a part of the work in each household. A field assistant already trained in gathering statistical data on crops asked a set of questions of seventy-five farmers in three villages, including Magumeri, where he was carrying on a fertilizer demonstration. Later this same young man did some work collecting information on kinship behavior among a number of people throughout Bornu. Much later still, after we moved to the capital, we asked school officials there to allow us to question the Maiduguri school children which we did *en masse* using the help of school teachers and Dr. and Mrs. Rosman. All the pupils were asked questions about the status rating of occupations, and about their marriage preferences with particular ethnic groups. These questionnaire data were extremely useful since they could be utilized to check some major conclusions concerning a whole series of attitudes, as well as economic and kinship behavior which involved a great deal of variation across the population. However it is important to note that such highly selective data collection had to be done at the end of the field trip when we knew what questions to ask and could interpret answers in light of our broader understanding of the cultural context.

- 121 members of differing groups are no longer secure in their expectations from others. Though the larger cultural goals may continue to operate, groups may find that previously unattainable goals are now within reach. Though the nature of sanctions may remain the same, individuals are uncertain when they might anticipate sanctions. In choosing a particular path to achieve his goals, an individual may find that his behavior towards others brings about sanctions. He then must determine whether he can achieve his goals despite these sanctions, and whether the goals are worth the difficulties which are thus brought about, or whether he must abandon behavior of that sort.

B. The Nature of the Data.

- 12 The data on which the present study is based lie along two dimensions, social structure and acculturation. The manner in which data was chosen for study and collected for each of these variables will be discussed in the following section.

1. Delineating community social structure.

- 124 Eight groups and categories were selected for analysis. These certainly do not exhaust the total number of social groups and categories to be found in the community of Geldam. They merely represent eight clearly definable social units, each operating within a distinctive sphere of Kanuri culture. These eight groups and categories are themselves resultant from the interaction of variables which bring about community social

- 124 structure as described in the closing section of the previous chapter.

They are as follows:

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1. Aristocracy - a small social group, functioning largely within the area of political organization. Five members of this group were chosen for study.
2. Koranic Malams - a social category, functioning largely within the area of religion. Some internal structuring occurs within this category. Three members were chosen for study.
3. Canteen Traders - a social category, functioning largely within the area of economics. Six members of this category were chosen for study.
4. NA Malams - a social category, but since it is small in size and because its members, having much in common, tend to interact, it has certain group characteristics. It functions largely in the area of political organization. Six members of this category were chosen for study.
5. Kabuna - a social group functioning largely within the area of political organization. Six members of this group were chosen for study.
5. Craftsmen - a large social category, encompassing many types of craft specialists who form groups within the general category. The craftsmen function largely in the area of economics. Six members were chosen for study.
7. Talaka - an extremely large and heterogeneous social cate-

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gory, including many sorts of individuals, but limited here to those who are not full-time specialists, yet perform some non-skilled activity in addition to farming. Eight members of this category were chosen for study.

[559]<sup>8</sup>. Low-status Individuals - a social category made up of specialists who traditionally have a low status in Kanuri culture. These are full-time specialists, who usually learn their specialty from their fathers. Four members of this category were chosen for study.

124 The forty-four individuals in the eight groups and categories who make up the sample for the present study are found listed in Table XIII. Though it would have been desirable to have chosen the individuals making up the sample through some randomizing method, which would have eliminated the possibility of the selection of informants who are good examples of the author's thesis, this was not possible because of the conditions

125 of field work. As will be explained in the following section, data on acculturation was obtained from each of these forty-four informants through a long questionnaire which took two hours to administer and which included a number of questions dealing

124 with sensitive topics. It was necessary to establish close relations with each of the forty-four individuals included in the present study before he could be used as an informant. This eliminated the possibility of choosing informants in a random way. It may be added, however, that the author was well aware of this problem at the time that the study was done. He consciously tried to handle the problem of bias by selecting as informants individuals who were good examples of the group or

Table XIII

List of Individuals Making up the Sample

|          |                         |                             |                                                                                      |
|----------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 115      | 1. <u>Aristocracy:</u>  | Yerima Mustapha-            | Ajia of Geidam.                                                                      |
| 565      | (6)                     | Lowan Ashek-                | A Lowan of Geidam.                                                                   |
| 463      |                         | Lowan Kagu-                 | A former Lowan of Geidam.                                                            |
| 551      |                         | Malam Jalo-                 | An NA appointee in charge of the ferry; had been offered a Lowanship but refused it. |
| 124      |                         | Sidi Momon-                 | Nephew of Yerima; an NA Messenger.                                                   |
| [792] 2. | <u>Koranic Malams:</u>  |                             |                                                                                      |
|          | (3)                     | Liman Bashir-               | Liman Zomabe of Geidam (leads Friday prayers).                                       |
|          |                         | Liman Habib-                | Liman Ngumeribe of Geidam (leads prayers on religious holidays).                     |
|          |                         | Malam Baba Gonyi-           | a Malam attached to Yerima's household.                                              |
| [441] 3. | <u>Canteen Traders:</u> |                             |                                                                                      |
|          | (6)                     | Alhaji Malam Modu Karabimc- | a dealer in hides and skins who buys for a European trading company.                 |
|          |                         | Malam Momon Gordo-          | operator of a canteen dealing in cloth.                                              |
|          |                         | Alhaji Amadu Kolon-         | operator of a canteen, and a dealer in groundnuts.                                   |
|          |                         | Alhaji Abacha Modu-         | operator of a canteen, and a dealer in groundnuts.                                   |
|          |                         | Alhaji Bukar Dan Alkali-    | a dealer in kola nuts and cattle.                                                    |
|          |                         | Alhaji Shetima-             | operator of a canteen, and a dealer in groundnuts.                                   |
| [634] 4. | <u>NA Malams:</u>       |                             |                                                                                      |
|          | (6)                     | Malam Ali Mandara-          | Chief Scribe of Geidam.                                                              |
|          |                         | Malam Bulama-               | Treasurer of Geidam.                                                                 |
|          |                         | Malam Kasem-                | Veterinary official.                                                                 |
|          |                         | Malam Maldugu-              | Head-master of the primary school in Geidam.                                         |
|          |                         | Malam Ali Malami-           | Dispenser.                                                                           |
|          |                         | Malam Bulama-               | Agricultural expert.                                                                 |

Table XIII (continued)

|                                            |                             |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 115<br>565<br>463<br>551<br>• 124<br>[634] | 5. <u>Kabuna:</u><br>(6)    | Wakil Guloma-<br>Bukar Gubio-<br>Grema Momon-<br><br>Wakil Ali Geje-<br><br>Bukar Bultuawu-<br>Kengadi-                                             | one of the important kabuna.<br>a minor kabuna.<br>a young kabuna of intermedi-<br>ary rank.<br>Yerima's assistant; head<br>of all the kabuna.<br>a minor kabuna.<br>one of the important kabuna.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                            | 6. <u>Craftsmen:</u><br>(6) | Malam Chiari<br>Katima-<br>Kazela Modu Katima-<br>Mastapha Alima-<br>Malam Modu Kelid-<br>ama-<br>Modu Kelidama<br>(the younger)-<br>Bukar Wanzama- | a house builder and repairer.<br>a house builder and repairer.<br>a dyer.<br>a leather-worker.<br>a leather-worker.<br>a barber.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                            | 7. <u>Talaka:</u><br>(8)    | Adamu-<br><br>Homadu Farashama-<br><br>Malam Shani-<br><br>Malam Gumbo-<br><br>Tijani-<br><br>Ali Goroma-<br><br>Lowan Limami-<br><br>Baba Mainta-  | a taberna who sells in the<br>market-place.<br>a sewer of horse-blankets<br>sold in the market-place.<br>a laborer who works for one<br>of the European trading<br>companies.<br>a seller of gowns in the<br>market-place.<br>a fathema who sells in the<br>market-place.<br>a retail seller of kola<br>nuts in the market-place.<br>a low level retainer of the<br>Ajia's who does not have<br>a horse.<br>a dealer in almost anything<br>for a commission. |

Table XIII (continued)

8. Low-status individuals:

(4)

Bukar Mandalma- a tanner.

Yahuda Gundama- a praise-singer and drummer.

Mastapha Mandalma- a tanner.

Abdu Gursam- a butcher.

Total: 44 individuals.

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- 124 category which they were to represent. It was required that an informant be a full-time specialist in the activities which characterize any group or category. It is evident that a Koranic Malam, an NA Malam, a Kabuna, a Craftsman, or a member of the Low-status group (tanners, butchers and praise-singers) are members of a clear-cut group or category. Individuals with ambiguous roles were not included in the sample. In the case of the Aristocracy, the Canteen Traders, and the Talaka, judgments were involved in the selection of informants. A decision had to be made as to whether the Aristocrats in Geldam were restricted solely to Yerima Mustapha or whether the group might be enlarged to include others as well who were far below Yerima in social prestige. A decision had to be made which separated the category of Canteen Traders from the many less successful tradesmen in Geldam. A decision also had to be made concerning the defining criteria for the category designated as "Talaka" in the study.

Once individuals were singled out who met the criteria for membership in the eight groups and categories, they were contacted through intervening people, and a relationship with them was established. In time this led to the use of the selected individual as an informant in the study. Every effort was made to avoid choosing acculturated individuals in those categories where it was predicted that greater acculturation would occur, and unacculturated individuals where they would be predicted to occur. Indeed, it will become clear that biased selection on

- 124 the part of the investigator with respect to the variable of acculturation can have played little or no part in obtaining the present results, since the various groups and categories which were used in the study themselves differ in the areas of culture in which they are acculturated. There is no simple division into acculturated and unacculturated groups.

## 2. Measures of Acculturation.

121 Much of the year spent in the field in the town of Geidam  
114 was devoted to work in two problem areas: delineation of community social structure, which was described above, and working out measures of acculturation. In the final three months spent in Geidam the actual data on which the present study is based [12] were collected. Until that time it was necessary to acquire a general understanding of Kanuri culture, to learn the language, and to see the areas in which Kanuri culture was most affected by external influences.

125 Data on acculturation were acquired through a question-  
124 naire-interview, administered in Kanuri to forty-four informants. The questionnaire comprises seventy-five parts, many of these long and complex questions requiring discursive answers. It took approximately two hours to interview each informant.

125 Thirty of the seventy-five questions were concerned with meas-  
177 ures of acculturation. These are presented in Table XIV. It can be seen that the measures of acculturation refer to a wide variety of behavioral areas. These include: language; posses-

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The data elicited by the questionnaire-interview form the basis of the present chapter. They will be presented in the form of tables, each of which is discussed in the text. The tables are grouped according to areas of information with which they deal. They will be presented in the following order:

|               |                                                                 |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Table XV.     | Age distribution of the sample.                                 |
| Table XVI.    | Knowledge of other languages.                                   |
| Table XVII.   | Ability to read.                                                |
| Table XVIII.  | Western Material Goods: possession.                             |
| Table XIX.    | Western Material Goods: knowledge about material items.         |
| Table XX.     | Western Material Goods: ideas about usefulness.                 |
| Table XXI.    | Western Material Goods: comparison of horse and bicycle.        |
| Table XXII.   | Western Material Goods: cigarettes and beer.                    |
| Table XXIII.  | Western Material Goods: wearing shoes and trousers.             |
| Table XXIV.   | Religious Behavior: fasting during a minor fast.                |
| Table XXV.    | Religious Behavior: wearing charms.                             |
| Table XXVI.   | Western Medicine: going to a doctor; effectiveness of medicine. |
| Table XXVII.  | Western Medicine: treatment of six diseases.                    |
| Table XXVIII. | Arbitration of disputes: before the Lowan or in court.          |
| Table XXIX.   | Charity and generosity: giving a gown to a stranger.            |
| Table XXX.    | Education: sending son or daughter to school.                   |
| Table XXXI.   | Education: sending son to Koranic Malam or to school.           |
| Table XXXII.  | Desired Occupation: for self.                                   |
| Table XXXIII. | Desired Occupation: choice of four occupations.                 |
| Table XXXIV.  | Desired Occupation: aspirations for son.                        |
| Table XXXV.   | Marriage: willingness to marry out.                             |
| Table XXXVI.  | Marriage: willingness to marry an educated woman.               |
| Table XXXVII. | Marriage: willingness to allow wife to work.                    |

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The entire sample of 44 individuals has a mean age of 39.55 (see Table XV), and a range from 22 to 60 years. The mean ages

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Table XV.

• 124 Age distribution of the sample and of each of the eight groups

|                                  | <u>Mean age</u> | <u>Range</u> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| NA Malams                        | 32.67           | 25-44        |
| Talaka                           | 36.5            | 22-51        |
| Low-status Individuals           | 37.75           | 25-47        |
| Aristocracy                      | 39.4            | 24-56        |
| <u>Entire sample</u> median = 40 | 39.55           | 22-60        |
| Craftsmen                        | 40.0            | 30-57        |
| Koranic Malams                   | 43.67           | 30-56        |
| Canteen Operators                | 43.67           | 40-47        |
| Kabuna                           | 45.67           | 35-60        |

for each of the eight groups which are compared in this chapter are also given in Table XV. The means of six of the eight groups are within four years of the mean age of the entire sample. The two extreme groups, the NA Malams (mean age = 32.67) and the kabuna (mean age = 45.67) are in one case somewhat younger and in the other case somewhat older than the entire group. This age difference might be expected to have some effect on the hypotheses advanced earlier, since one might expect younger individuals to be more acculturated than older individuals. Unfortunately, the NA Malams as a group tend to be young, so that the head-master of the school is only twenty-five years old. Malam Ali Mandara, the Chief Scribe, is forty-four years old and has been included in the sample. He is probably the oldest NA Malam in the town. Conversely, the Kabuna tend to be an older group, and the thirty-five and thirty-

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\*124 seven year old Kabuna are probably among the youngest members  
 \*634 of the entire group. This is because Yerima Mustapha will keep potential Kabuna in minor positions for some years before he feels that they are ready for the responsibility of performing [121] a Kabuna's role and gives them a horse. Although age is probably a variable in determining an individual's degree of acculturation, it is secondary to his position within a given group or category as will be demonstrated in the succeeding \*634 pages of this section. Though the Kabuna are older as a \*177 group, they nevertheless tend to be acculturated in specific areas. Though the NA Malams are younger as a group, they tend to be acculturated in certain areas and not in others. Age as a variable will be examined in detail in a later section.

A. Analysis of Responses to the Thirty Acculturation Measures.

\*177 The first acculturation measure to be discussed is knowl-  
 191 edge of languages other than Kanuri, presented as Table XVI. Twenty-seven members of the sample speak some Hausa; 18 speak Hausa well; 9 speak a little Hausa. Sixteen speakers of Hausa \*177 are found in three groups: Aristocracy (4), Canteen Operators \*191 (5), NA Malams (6). This is clearly related to the importance \*441 of the Hausa language in two spheres of activity: trade and administration. All of the traders speak some Hausa; this is because Hausa is widespread as the trade language throughout Northern Nigeria. Europeans in trade learn to speak Hausa rather

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(1)

a medium sized rural Kanuri town, learning the language and making contacts among the local residents.

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In approximately four months the writer could carry on interviews in the language, and by the end of the eighth, an outline of political and economic structure in the area was gained, plus some understanding of kinship, cultural values, and household economics. Although participant observation techniques continued until the end of the field trip, it was now deemed possible to introduce some quantitative techniques into data collection. For this purpose, questionnaires were designed on market involvement of peasant cultivators, kinship behaviour norms, marriage preferences among tribes, ranking of traditional and non-traditional occupations and a scheduled interview was made up concerning household income and expenditure. A Kanuri assistant was hired to conduct the surveys on market involvement of peasant cultivators and kinship behaviour norms. In addition, he kept records on the crop production techniques and amounts harvested as well as daily intake of the staple grain food, for seventy-five farmers in three towns.

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The complexity of Kanuri society makes generalisations based on intensive work in only one community extremely precarious. Thus other parts of Bornu were visited, especially the capital Maiduguri, and Geidam, a district capital in the northern part of the Emirate. Side trips to Dikwa and Biu Emirate and Damboa and Damaturu districts helped to broaden the perspectives of observation made on the basis of a long term stay in Magumeri. Innumerable visits on horseback to small hamlets helped in this respect as well. Finally, the variations possible in Kanuri social life were made even more apparent by the presence

- 124 (1) An interpreter was employed for the first ten days and then departed leaving the writer and wife with only one person, the local school teacher, who could speak only a very little English.  
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available terminology which distinguishes their actual biological relationship refer back to relatives they have in common when describing or referring to the relationship, pointing out (if necessary) that their mothers' or fathers' are not the same person. This is part of a more general and commonly utilised rule of reference when speaking of kinship relations. In order to specify exactly what relationship exists between himself and some other person an individual most often gives the nearest common relative and then explains his own and the other person's relationship to the common relative. Thus an informant explains that he and his cross or parallel cousin have kakande tile (the same grandparent).

#### Behaviour Norms

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The behaviour norms associated with the kinship organisation are classified into four overlapping categories. In Kanuri these are called nungu (shame or shame-avoidance), barsun (respect or discipline-respect), suli (joking) and nunkam (friendship or fondness). Table I summarises the manner in which these norms are distributed among three classes each of consanguinal and affinal kin. (1)

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- (1) The information was obtained from 44 Kanuri males of Maiduguri, ranging across all class strata but more heavily representative of the lower classes. They responded to questions about their behaviour towards 33 different kin relations. The interviewer was instructed to ask subjects how they acted towards each of the relatives in question. In the opinion of the field assistant this was in fact the major consideration in the responses given to his questions. This seems to be corroborated when the questionnaire material is compared to qualitative data gathered independently. Other indications that the real rather than ideal culture is being reported are given by the blanks in the original notebooks when informants refused to answer. Their reasons for not responding were written down by the field assistant. In all cases, refusals were due to the subjects not having that particular relative. This supports the notion that informants were responding in reference to their actual behaviour towards the relative being asked about. However, such conclusions must not be taken too far for it is inconceivable that ideal patterns of behaviour had no effect on the responses of

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TABLE I

602 Ego's Responses to Categories of Relatives Expressed as a Percentage of his Total Response to the Category\*

| **                        | Par. & Par-Coll | Ego's Coll | O/Par & O/G/Par | Affines of Par-Coll | Senior in-laws | Junior in-laws |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| shame                     | 48.8            | 5.8        | 0               | 26.1                | 89.8           | 14.6           |
| respect                   | 82.4            | 33.8       | 14.9            | 97.5                | 96.4           | 42.1           |
| joking                    | 1.9             | 2.4        | 100.0           | 0                   | 2.3            | 66.0           |
| friendship                | 12.9            | 76.4       | 0               | 7.0                 | 16.6           | 26.6           |
| total number of responses | 262             | 233        | 87              | 157                 | 168            | 233            |

\* The figures are percentages of the total response; thus 48.8% of the 262 responses given to parents and parents' collaterals were mungu (shame). They have been reduced to percentages in order to make them comparable with other columns in which total responses add up to different numbers.

\*\* Par. = Parents; Coll. = Collaterals.

#### Shame (mungu)

Mungu is a general category of behaviour which describes relationships that are restricted in some way by rule. Under this general rubric there are two distinct kinds of action which hold for two different categories of relatives. Firstly, shame-avoidance

informants, especially in the cases of extreme aberrancy (if any such existed). Consequently in order to be as conservative as possible, it would be wise to conclude that the questionnaire material represents an attempt to obtain a picture of real kinship behaviour, which has most likely had its sharply deviant content rounded off by the ideal patterns of the culture.

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593 activities. That is to say, culturally speaking, there is an ideology  
• [129] of male dominance in the husband-wife relationship. This prescription  
for male superiority was enacted one day by a female entertainer who at-  
tempted to teach the anthropologist's wife the proper manner for ap-  
proaching the presence of a husband. She came in as if bearing food  
and went down on her knees with her head bowed to one side and eyes  
downcast, while demurely presenting the offering to her lord and master,  
and then quietly removing herself. Although this was all performed in  
a theatrical manner, the attitude of submissiveness was the lesson  
833 being taught. Again, although sexual experimentation is highly thought  
562 of by some males, it is generally frowned on for the male to assume a  
position underneath the woman during coitus. This is rationalized by  
the belief that the semen will run back into the male and "go bad",  
causing disease, i.e. something bad will result from a male allowing  
229 a woman to lie on top of him. This is reminiscent of the claim of one  
554 very high ranking Kanuri nobleman who, when discussing apartment build-  
ings in America, disdained this architectural concept as distasteful to  
himself, unless only he and people of equal rank were allowed living  
quarters on the top floor.

593 The observed facts of interpersonal relations in marriage  
183 are enormously various, and a full circle of almost complete conformity  
to complete denial of the cultural ideal can be seen in almost any  
Bornu town where there is a representative sample of the various strata  
of Kanuri society. The following are some of the major variables oper-  
ating in the marriage relationship which affect the extent of denial or  
conformity to the ideology of male dominance.